

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

I. SCOPE

In the early days of the Library of Congress, children's books arrived in an unsystematic fashion. This situation changed with the Copyright Law of 1870, after which the Library systematically assembled a children's book collection.

The largest single placement of children's books occupies shelves in the PZ literature area. English-language fiction, folklore, poetry, and simple books of science and technology is followed by ranges of foreign-language fiction (except those in Eastern languages held by the Asian Division).

Beyond the PZ class, children's books are scattered throughout the Library's vast collections and represent biography, history, geography, science, technology, religion and the arts. Juvenile holdings also include periodicals, school readers, moveable and toy books; films, audio-visual and electronic materials, maps, and comic books. In book or other formats they are dispersed throughout the Library from the General Collection to the various custodial divisions.

In addition to American and British imprints, the collection includes many shelves of foreign-language children's books acquired by gifts, purchase or deposit.

Unparalleled secondary research materials relating to children's literature include monographs, bibliographies, reference guides, review media, professional journals, and catalogs in English and other languages.

II. SIZE

Due to the inestimably large "scatteration" of juvenile among adult books, the size of the collection cannot be determined; however, it is estimated to be around 500,000 books, including 17,000 – 20,000 American juvenile titles housed in the stacks of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The Library's holdings of children's materials cover the mainstream as well as the special, unique, and rare. The strength of the Library's holdings, as compared to all other children's literature collections in the United States – if not in the world - lies in their impressive scope, consistency over time and their supportive secondary materials, and the fact that the collection is non-selective an advantage over all other special children's book collections in this country.

The Library's juvenile collections afford a broad view of American attitudes toward the family, the governance of young citizens, popular and traditional culture. In addition, children's book illustrations are an inexhaustible resource for information about American childhood – including school and home life, games, toys, and children's clothing.

The foreign-language materials further enhance the study of the United States and other national and regional cultures, to a degree not possible anywhere else in the country.

Facility of access to these materials and their systematic acquisition and processing must be considered another great strength when measured against other special collections in this country and abroad. Children's books in the Library of Congress are acquired, cataloged, preserved, microfilmed, digitized, and are accessible through the same bibliographic controls as all other materials. With the initiation, in the nineteen sixties, of the Annotated Card program, bibliographic access to children's books was further strengthened.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

The Library's rare children's book collection was created by Valta Parma who was appointed the first curator of rare books in 1927. Parma selected about 7000 children's books – primarily from the early 1700s to 1850 - which became the nucleus of the rare children's book collection. In the nineteen seventies, further juveniles titles were transferred from the General to the Rare Book collection by William Matheson, then chief of the Rare Book Division. (The earliest American juvenile Parma found was Cotton Mather's *A Family Well Ordered, or an Essay to render Parents and Children happy in one another* (Boston: Printed by B. Green & J. Allen, 1699).

Gradually the collection began to grow, especially through gifts which included, in the 1930s, a number of important books given by several donors, J. K. Lilly, Maude Blair, and John Davis Batchelder among them.

In 1940, Frank J. Hogan presented the Library with a number of fine items including three American hornbooks, ten New England primers; three known copies of Goodrich's *The Tales of Peter Parley About America* (Boston: S.G. Goodrich, 1827); and the rare 1775 Providence edition of the *The England Primer Improved* (Providence: J. Waterman, 1775). The collection also contains two copies of *Cock Robin's Death and Funeral*, both printed in Boston, one about 1780 (Boston: Bible & Hearth, [1780], the other, believed to be unique, in 1790.

Other noteworthy gift collections which included juvenile items are the Jean Hersholt Collection of Anderseniana – said to be the most complete Andersen collection outside of Denmark – which contains original manuscripts, letters, first editions, presentation copies, and related materials; the Kiplingiana collection – one of the finest in the country - which includes manuscripts of Kipling's stories and poems, original letters, pen-and-ink

sketches and other items; the Lessing Rosenwald collection which contains a number of incunabula fables (not classified as juvenile); and the Marian S. Carson Collection (acquired in 1996), which includes treasures such as *The Royal Primer, or, an easy and pleasant Guide to the Art of Reading* (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1770), a British primer reprinted in the colonies by John Dunlap, who printed the Declaration of Independence from Thomas Jefferson's handwritten copy, in Philadelphia in 1776; and *Mansion of Happiness* (Salem: W. & S.B. Ives, 1843), the first board game published in the United States (one of many games and toys in the collection).

In the early 1970s, noted collector d'Alte Welch, in his *A Bibliography of American Children's Books Printed Prior to 1821* (American Antiquarian Society, 1972), appraised the Library's holding of rare children's books as second only to the holdings of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Among the holdings of the approximately 100 extremely rare children's books, are *The Children's Bible* (Philadelphia: A. Stuart, 1763); *The Child's New Play-Thing* (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1763); and four editions of *The History of the Holy Jesus* and *The Mother's Gift* (Philadelphia: W. Spotswood, 1791). Other rarities are James Janeway's *A Token for Children* (Boston: T. Hancock, 1728); *A little Pretty Pocket-Book, Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy, and Pretty Miss Polly*. (Worcester: I. Thomas, 1787); the first Worcester edition of *The History of Little, Goody Two Shoes* (Worcester: I. Thomas, 1787); *Easy and Instructive Lessons for Children. Also, the Ladder to Learning; or, a Selection of Fables, consisting of words of only one Syllable...* (Boston, 1804).

Other highlights which give an indication of the remarkable variety and historical representation of the rare children's book collection, range from colonial (*A Course of Sermons on Early Piety* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1721) to revolutionary days (*Curious hieroglyphick Bible ... for the amusement of youth* (Worcester: I. Thomas, 1788) from the Civil War (*The Myriopticon: A Historical Panorama of the Rebellion* (Springfield: Milton Bradley, 1890); and the great Depression (*Pop-UP Mother Goose* (New York: Blue Ribbon, 1933).

Books include the didactic and whimsical and range from a paper doll book (*The History of Little Fanny* (London: S. and J. Fuller, 1811) to an elegant lift-the-flap book (*A Suit of Armor for Youth* (London: R. Ackermann, 1821); from a late 18th century silver hornbook to a collection of children's books - poignantly inscribed to their children by Nikolay Alexandrovich Romanov - the last Tsar of Russia.

The General and Custodial Collections

Even today the General Collection contains thousands of early and rare children's books not available anywhere else. Noteworthy is also the great wealth of nineteenth-century periodicals – notably broad in the great post-Civil War era - including *Young Men of America*, *The Youth's Companion* and *St. Nicholas*; an outstanding collection of McGuffey Readers, including primers and spellers.

The Library's collections of foreign children's books include rare items such as the *Bibliothèque des Enfants* (London: John Marshall, circa 1800) a boxed, sixteen-volume instructional set for English children, learning French; a collection of rare Chinese children's books; the Oleg Pavlovich Grushnikov Collection of some 10,000 Soviet and Russian illustrated children's books; a unique collection of Japanese children's books from the World War II era, many issued during the Allied Occupation.

Children's Literature in other Formats

Examples of original art about or relating to children's books – held by the Library's Prints and Photograph Division - include Palmer Cox, Paul Goble, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Howard Pyle, Lynd Ward. Especially noteworthy are the original drawings for the 1916 edition of Charles Kingsley's classic *The Water Babies* illustrated by Jessie Wilcox Smith. Other artists included are Peggy Bacon, Fritz Eichenberg, Antonio Frasconi and others.

The Manuscript Division's holdings relating to children's literature contain, among other items, letters and papers of such authors and illustrators as Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Louisa May Alcott, Ludwig Bemelmans, John Ciardi, Samuel Clemens, Virginia Hamilton, Joel Chandler Harris, Kirk Munroe, and Frank Stockton. Other correspondence of significance appears in the Library's holdings of Presidential Papers. Here, for example, the Theodore Roosevelt Papers contain correspondence with such notable authors as Kenneth Grahame, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Rudyard Kipling. Other items of interest to the historian include the manuscript journal of a young boy growing up in Washington, D.C. in the mid-nineteenth century (*Growing Up on Capitol Hill. A Young Washingtonian's Journal, 1850-1852*. Edited by John J. McDonough. Library of Congress, 1997) and *The Journals of William Speiden, 1852-1855* which includes an illustrated notebook of the young Speiden who accompanied his father on Commodore Perry's voyage to Japan.

Materials relating to the study of children's literature can be found in many other divisions including the American Folk Life Center (e.g. the Archive of Folk Song); the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (children's books and magazines in a number of formats including audio Braille and digital Braille); the Motion Picture, Television and Recorded Sound (children's films, filmstrips, TV/radio programs and other audio-visual materials); the Serial and Government Publications Division (Comic Books collection). Other divisions holding material relating to children's literature are the Hispanic; Geography and Map; and the Music Division.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Fifty rare illustrated nineteenth and early twentieth-century children's books – in full text – have been digitized and are available on the website of the Rare Book and Special

Collections Division, including the first American edition of *Little Pretty Pocket Book* (Worcester, 1787).

Over two hundred subscription databases are available on-site to assist the children's literature researcher, including *Book Review Digest*, *LitFinder* (full-text access to children's literature); *Music Online: American Song*; *Poem Finder*, *Biography and Genealogy Master index*, *Worldcat*, *Librarians' Internet Index: Websites you can Trust*, and others.

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

Weaknesses

The most profound weakness of the Library's children's book collection – which seriously diminishes its research and exhibition value and prevents curators from soliciting collections or from acquiring replacement copies - is the preservation challenges it presents. These condition have been noted as early as the 1960s after a study confirmed that the Library's children's books are the most heavily borrowed and abused of all books that are allowed to circulate.

The Library's General Collection – the country's most comprehensive collection of children's books – and the original source of the rare children's book collection - holds countless books that rare, autographed, out-of-print, last copies, irreplaceable, prohibitively expensive, and tomorrow's treasures and classics.

Areas especially affected are illustrated books, classics, popular fiction, current children's book best sellers, nursery rhymes, folk and fairy tales, award-winning books and others by noted writers and illustrators; television, film and other performance tie-in books; holiday books, books in series, books with mechanical devices, popular non-fiction.

Many books from the above categories are missing altogether.

A sampling of current prices for several modern children's book diamonds give an indication of the enormous financial challenge if an attempt were made to replenish the collection with replacement copies; (an even more daunting thought when one considers currently available funds: The Children's Literature GEN-PAC fund for FY2008 is \$8,000.00). Examples include: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter (1902). Limited 1st ed., \$53,596.38; *How the Grinch stole Christmas* (1957) Signed, 1st ed. \$19,396.79; *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (1963). 1st ed. \$18,150.00; *Charlotte's Web* by E.B.White (1952) Signed, later ed. \$8,200.00 ; and *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey. (1941) 4th ed. (1st not available), \$604.01. Replacement costs for an average picture book range from \$100 to \$500.

It is recommended that children's books which are now housed in the General Collection no longer circulate, but rather that they become – as was their original purpose a research

collection within the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. It is further recommended that a small selection of first issues of children's books notable for their authorship, content, illustration or format – will be collected annually and kept with their dust jackets and their title pages unmarked.

The digitization annually of select rare children's books should be continued.

Exclusions

The Library of Congress adds all juvenile materials, regardless of format, deposited for copyright, with the following exceptions: religious materials for students in vacation church schools, instructions in devotions, catechisms and question books, and textbooks in religion unless written by a well-known author or issued by an important trade publisher; paperback reprints unless they contain important new material or are newly illustrated; elementary and secondary textbooks except for important titles in American history, social and physical sciences, and other subjects in special reader demand, or if they demonstrate new teaching methods or approaches; answer books, workbooks, tests, teacher's manuals; correspondence school lessons, syllabi and textbooks issued for use by a particular teacher's class; and coloring books and paper dolls.